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SUBJECT: ICELAND: FOREIGN MINISTER DISMISSES CALLS FOR INDEPENDENT RENDITIONS INQUIRY

Refs: A) Copenhagen 38

B) Evans-Wheeler emails 11/29/07

C) 07 Reykjavik 313

D) Copenhagen 50

¶1. (SBU) Summary: Iceland's Foreign Minister flatly dismissed opposition calls for an independent inquiry into suspected CIA rendition flights through Iceland in a parliamentary session on February 28. The question time discussion was spurred by Icelandic State Television's February 25 broadcast of a Danish TV documentary about rendition flights through Danish territory. In answering, the FM noted that the government's stated intent to inspect suspected rendition flights has been lauded as an example for Denmark and other governments to follow. The FM's comments were her strongest public statement to date that no further investigation of the issue is necessary. End Summary.

¶2. (U) On February 25, Icelandic State Television (RUV) broadcast the Danish DR1-TV documentary "CIA's Danske Forbindelse," which alleges that CIA-operated aircraft possibly including those used in rendition flights have repeatedly used Danish territory and airspace (ref A). The program alleged that several flights had also stopped off in Iceland. Opposition leader and Left-Green Party Chair Steingrimur Sigfusson referred to the RUV broadcast in an Althingi (parliament) question time session on February 28, asking Foreign Minister Ingibjorg Solrun Gisladottir whether the documentary didn't demonstrate both the need and the viability of an independent investigation of whether similar flights had used Icelandic territory for the purposes of rendition.

¶3. (U) Gisladottir flatly refused the Left-Green call for an investigation, noting the work of a Ministry for Foreign Affairs (MFA) review and pointing to the MFA's conclusion that it would be unproductive to attempt to determine whether suspected terrorists had actually been transported through Iceland. Should some further evidence pointing to renditions come to light, the MFA would review its stance, the FM noted, but as the matter currently stands the government has focused on ensuring that such activities do not take place in the future. Gisladottir added that DR1-TV lauded the Icelandic government's policy of searching all suspected rendition flights (ref B) in a subsequent program, which she hopes Iceland's RUV will see fit to broadcast.

¶4. (U) Pressed further by Sigfusson, FM Gisladottir added the caution that aircraft with tail numbers allegedly linked to the CIA can not definitively be pronounced rendition flights: "I say possible [rendition flights] because the aircraft numbers under discussion could obviously be [in Iceland] in connection with other parties or for other purposes than these."

¶5. (SBU) Comment: Gisladottir's response is her strongest move to date to knock down the proposal of a further inquiry into the

renditions issue. The FM may feel her earlier moves on the issue (refs B and C) have given her breathing room to withstand opposition calls for further action regarding events previous to her tenure at the MFA.

VAN VOORST